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ABSTRACT

This report profiles baccalaureate colleges, examining the elements that combine to create their special educational environment. Based on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Education and the "Campus Trends" reports published by the American Council on Education, it found that typical baccalaureate colleges continue to exemplify the long-held popular image of a college, namely a small, 4-year residential institution. Between 1980 and 1990, one in six institutions of higher education in the United States was a baccalaureate college. Most students enrolled are full-time, nearly one in six are students of color, and almost two-thirds of full-time undergraduates receive some form of student financial aid. The dependence of baccalaureate colleges on tuition and fees as a primary source of revenue has increased, from 46 percent of revenues in 1980-81 to 52 percent in 1990-91. The proportion of education and general expenditures being spent on scholarships and fellowships is also increasing, from 12 percent in 1980-81 to 20 percent in 1990-91. (MDM)

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RESEARCH BRIEFS Volume 4, Number 5 • 1993

Division of Policy Analysis and Research
American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.

A Contemporary Profile of Baccalaureate Colleges[1]

by Cathy Henderson

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A Contemporary Profile of Baccalaureate Colleges[1]

by Cathy Henderson

Despite enormous change and expansion of higher education in the last decade, baccalaureate colleges have retained their distinct character among higher educational institutions. Compared to other types of colleges, they are more likely to be small, independent, and residential, and to focus on the education of undergraduate students. This profile of baccalaureate colleges will examine the elements that combine to create this special environment: the students who attend, the faculty who teach there, and the presidents who head these institutions.

HIGHLIGHTS

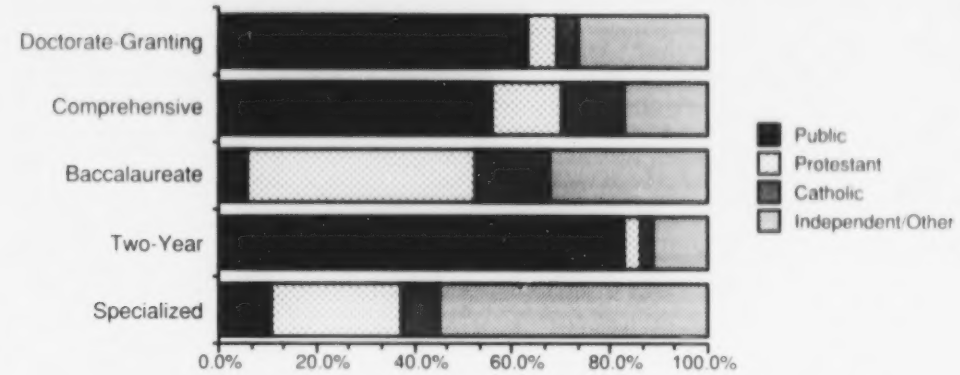
- A typical baccalaureate college continues to exemplify the long-held popular image of a college: a small, four-year institution where a majority of students reside on campus. Between 1980 and 1990, one in six institutions of higher education were baccalaureate colleges.
- The average size of a baccalaureate college increased from 914 to 1,145 students during this ten-year period.
- Most students (three in four) are enrolled full-time and more than half (three in five) are women. Approximately one in six are students of color. Almost two in three full-time undergraduates receive some form of student financial assistance.
- Undergraduate education is the focus of baccalaureate colleges and the vast majority of degrees granted are at the bachelor's level (86 percent).
- During the past decade, baccalaureate colleges enrolled one in twenty college students and awarded one in ten bachelor's degrees. However, in many of the liberal arts fields, baccalaureate colleges graduated a much larger share of the college students who received bachelor's degrees.
- The dependence of baccalaureate colleges on tuition and fees as a primary source of revenue is growing. In 1980-81, an average of 46 percent of revenues were generated from tuition and fees; ten years later, the proportion had risen to 52 percent.
- The proportion of education and general expenditures being spent on scholarships and fellowships also is increasing. In 1980-81, it averaged 12 percent; by 1990-91 this average had risen to 20 percent.
- In 1990, baccalaureate colleges were the most likely type of institution to have a woman president.

[1] *"Baccalaureate college," as used in this report, refers to colleges classified as Liberal Arts I, II, and II* by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. These colleges primarily focus on undergraduate education and award a substantial proportion of their bachelor's degrees in the liberal arts fields. Liberal Arts II* colleges award less than half of their degrees in liberal arts fields; but, because they enroll less than 1,500 students, they are too small to be labeled as "comprehensive" colleges and are included in this category.*

The primary sources of data used for this report were the annual IPEDS *survey administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the* Campus Trends *reports published by the American Council on Education.*

Figure 1

Percentage Distribution of Institutions by Religious Affiliation and Type, 1991–92



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

- Administrators at baccalaureate colleges are optimistic about the future. They have weathered the 1980s, when the number of recent high school graduates declined. Better use of resources, modest enrollment growth, and program expansion are some of the strategies that baccalaureate colleges are exploring to continue to meet the needs of undergraduate students in the future.

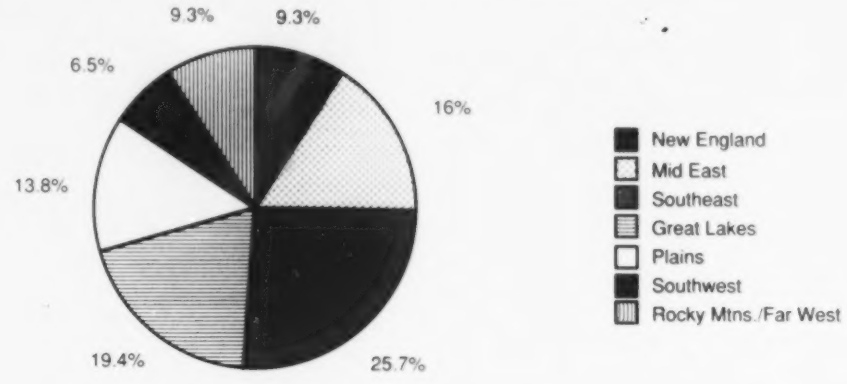
Institutional Characteristics

- In 1980-81, 18 percent of higher education institutions (595 of 3,270) were classified as baccalaureate colleges. By 1990-91, a decade later, this figure dropped slightly to 17 percent (557 of 595). This slight drop can be attributed to two factors. While some baccalaureate colleges closed during this time, many others expanded their master's program offerings and overall enrollment, and because of this were reclassified as "comprehensive" colleges.
- Baccalaureate colleges are most distinctive because they have smaller enrollments, and a higher proportion of students reside on campus. Data from the Department of Education's IPEDS surveys show that in 1990-91, 62 percent of full-time students at baccalaureate colleges lived on campus. This is twice as high as the proportion of their peers residing on campus at other four-year institutions (about 31 percent).
- In 1990-91 the average enrollment at baccalaureate colleges was 1,145 students. This average was far smaller than those for either doctorate-granting universities (14,940), comprehensive colleges (4,510), or two-year colleges (2,530). However, baccalaureate colleges have been growing in size. Between 1980-81 and 1990-91, the average size increased from 914 to 1,145 students (an increase of 25 percent. This was primarily due to increased emphasis on the recruitment of nontraditional students, many of whom were older and/or enrolled part-time. Both public and independent colleges experienced growth during this decade. Public baccalaureate colleges increased from an average of 1,157 to 1,558 (up 35 percent) while independent colleges grew from an average enrollment of 900 to 1,118 (up 24 percent).
- The vast majority of baccalaureate colleges (94 percent) are independent institutions and almost half of them maintain some sort of an affiliation with a Protestant organization (see figure 1).

  In 1991-92, most baccalaureate colleges were coeducational (85 percent). However, some remained single-sex institutions. Sixty of these institutions (11 percent) were women's colleges, 15 of which were primarily religious institutions; and ten (2 percent) were men's colleges, 6 of which were seminaries. Thirty-nine baccalaureate colleges were historically Black institutions: they comprised 7 percent of all baccalaureate institutions.

Figure 2

Regional Distribution of Baccalaureate Colleges: 1991–92



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

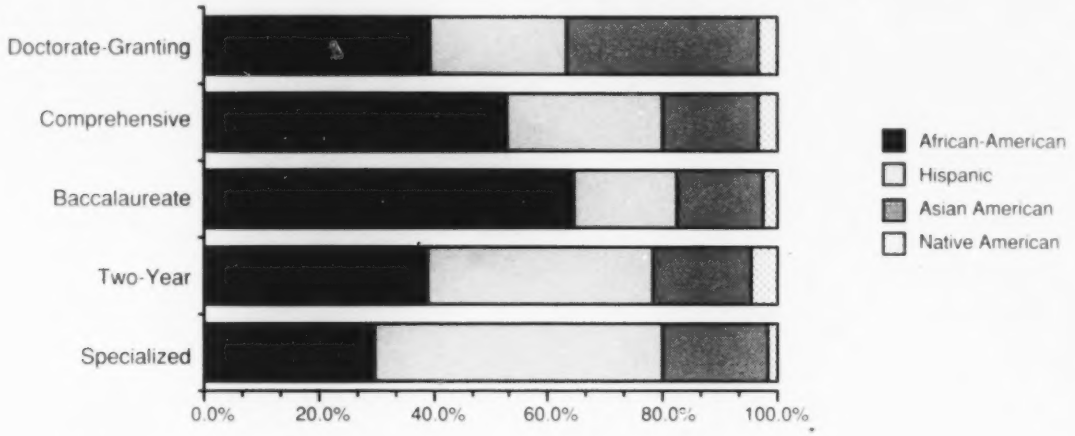
- Because the first baccalaureate colleges were founded in the East, many people still think of them as located mainly east of the Mississippi River. In fact, baccalaureate colleges are distributed across every region of the country (see figure 2).
- About three in four baccalaureate colleges use the semester system. However, the 4-1-4 calendar system (which provides a month of study in the middle of two sessions lasting four months each) is found at baccalaureate colleges more often than at other types of institutions: fifteen percent use this system. The middle month of study offers flexibility for faculty to design and teach special mini-courses and for students to undertake independent study or special research projects.

Student Characteristics

- Three in four students attending baccalaureate colleges in 1990-91 were enrolled full-time. This proportion was generally less at other types of colleges (36-74 percent). Baccalaureate colleges enrolled the highest proportion of female students (59 percent), compared to other institutions (45-57 percent).
- In 1990-91, enrollment of minority students comprised 16 percent of the total baccalaureate students, the largest groups being African-Americans (10 percent), Hispanics (3 percent), and Asian-Americans (2 percent). Native Americans comprised slightly less than 1 percent of the total. Baccalaureate colleges, similar to doctorate-granting universities, averaged a total minority enrollment of 16 percent. However, both types of institutions differed from the comprehensive, two-year, and specialized institutions, where minority enrollment was 20-24 percent.
- Among African-American students attending baccalaureate colleges, about half were at historically Black institutions and half were at predominantely white campuses.
- Compared to other types of higher education institutions, there are few baccalaureate colleges in the Southwest or West. This is where the majority of Hispanic students live and attend college. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hispanic students comprised a much smaller proportion of minority students at baccalaureate colleges (18 percent) than at other types of institutions (24-51 percent) (see figure 3).
- Compared to other types of institutions, baccalaureate colleges have the highest proportion of younger students (see figure 4). Almost three in five (57 percent) of baccalaureate college students were 21 years-old or younger. Across other types of institutions the range was 29-47 percent.
- Although most people think of typical baccalaureate college students as being within the traditional college-going ages (18-21), these colleges enroll a substantial number of older students too. Almost one in four (23 percent) of students at baccalaureate colleges are 30

Figure 3

Minority Enrollment by Institutional Type: 1990 – 91



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data

years of age or older. This proportion is similar to the share of older students attending other four-year institutions, where the range was 21-25 percent.

- The proportion of full-time undergraduate students who received financial aid was higher at baccalaureate colleges (65 percent) than at other four-year institutions (47 percent) or two-year colleges (39 percent).

Enrollment Trends

- For the past ten years, baccalaureate colleges have maintained a stable share of the total number of college students (about 5 percent). Although this is a modest proportion, it is important to note that baccalaureate colleges have endured a period of declining numbers of high school graduates, when many educators speculated that institutions that rely heavily on tuition and fee revenue would lose out in the competition to less expensive schools. Yet, baccalaureate colleges have remained competitive. In *Campus Trends, 1993*, seven out of ten baccalaureate colleges reported enrollment growth during the previous five years. More than half had experienced enrollment growth of 10 percent or more.
- Recent data show that efforts by baccalaureate college administrators to recruit a more diverse student body are providing mixed results. Data from the *Campus Trends, 1993* report show that the majority of baccalaureate colleges reported one-year increases in the enrollment of older students, African-American students, and transfer students. However, baccalaureate colleges were less likely than other institutional types to have reported recent increases in the enrollment of Hispanic, Asian-American, and Native American students.

Curriculum

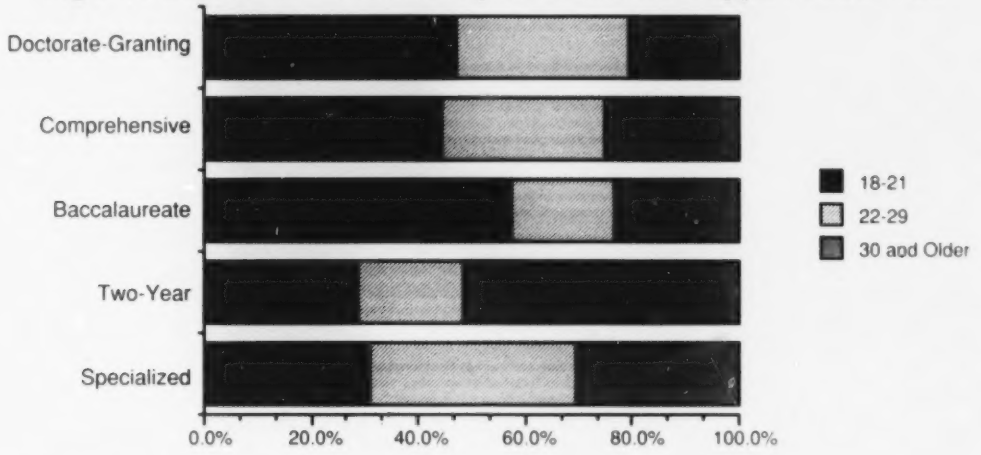
- Curriculum at baccalaureate colleges focuses especially on providing general education competencies. At nine of ten colleges, all undergraduates were required to complete a core amount of course work (*Campus Trends, 1990*). Typically, this meant five courses per semester for a full-time student. However, about a third of all colleges and universities define four courses as the normal courseload for a full-time student. Twelve or thirteen courses were usually required for concentration in a major.
- Across institutional types, baccalaureate colleges in 1990 were the most likely to require all students to take courses in western civilization (36 percent), foreign languages (31 percent), and in world civilization (24 percent).

Earned Degrees

- Undergraduate education is the focus of baccalaureate colleges. In 1988-89, 86 percent of all of the degrees awarded were at the

Figure 4

Age of Students Enrolled by Institutional Type: 1989 – 90



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

bachelor's level. This was slightly higher than the proportion ten years earlier in 1978-79 (82 percent).

- Baccalaureate colleges also award postbaccalaureate degrees. The proportion of postbaccalaureate degrees awarded increased from 6 to 9 percent during the 80s. This was because there was a change in the proportion of baccalaureate colleges which offered postbaccalaureate degrees. In 1978-79, only 25 percent of baccalaureate colleges offered such programs; by 1988-89, that figure had risen to 44 percent.
- By contrast, the number and proportion of certificates and associate degrees awarded declined. In 1978-79, 12 percent of awards were less than four-year degrees; ten years later, only 5 percent were below the bachelor's level.
- The number of baccalaureate college students who earn bachelor's degrees has remained stable at about 100,000 per year for the past ten years. This is about a tenth of the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded every year for the past ten years.
- Although baccalaureate colleges award about ten percent of all bachelor's degrees in the country every year, they graduate higher than average proportions of bachelor's degrees in certain fields. For example, in 1988-89, baccalaureate colleges awarded 27 percent of all of the bachelor's degrees awarded in the fields of philosophy, religion, and theology. The following list shows the fields where the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded in selected fields exceeds 10 percent (which might be normally expected):
  - Philosophy, Religion, and Theology (27 percent)
  - Foreign languages (19 percent)
  - Letters (16 percent)
  - Physical sciences (16 percent)
  - Social sciences (16 percent
  - Psychology (15 percent)
  - Mathematics (15 percent)
  - Life sciences (14 percent)
  - Visual and performing arts (13 percent)
- Thirty-seven percent of all baccalaureate colleges offered master's degrees, but only 3 percent of all master's degrees were awarded at baccalaureate colleges in 1988-89. Among those who had received master's degrees that year (approximately 9,300 students), almost three in four had concentrated in two fields: education (47 percent) and business (26 percent).
- The field of business management/marketing is becoming more popular among baccalaureate college students. In 1988-89, 21 percent of the bachelor's recipients chose that major, compared to only 12 percent in 1978-79. Although students at baccalaureate col-

Table A

Distribution of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees Awarded at Baccalaureate Colleges, by Field of Study: 1988 – 89

Category	Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees
	%	%
Area and ethnic studies	1.0	0.1
Business management, marketing	21.2	26.1
Communications	2.4	0.5
Computer information science	2.0	1.0
Education	9.7	46.7
Engineering	1.1	0.4
Foreign languages	2.1	0.7
Allied health, health sciences	4.8	4.1
Home economics	0.4	0.3
Letters	7.0	2.2
Liberal/general studies	3.2	2.6
Life sciences	5.1	0.7
Math	2.2	0.2
Multi/interdisciplinary	2.7	1.2
Philosophy and religion, theology	3.1	5.8
Physical sciences	2.7	0.3
Psychology	7.1	3.7
Social sciences	16.9	1.4
Visual and performing arts	4.6	1.9
Other	0.7	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0
N =	101,973	9,291

Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

leges major in diverse subject areas, three fields (business management/marketing, social sciences, and education) accounted for about half of the bachelor's degrees in 1988-89 (48 percent) (see table A).

Finances

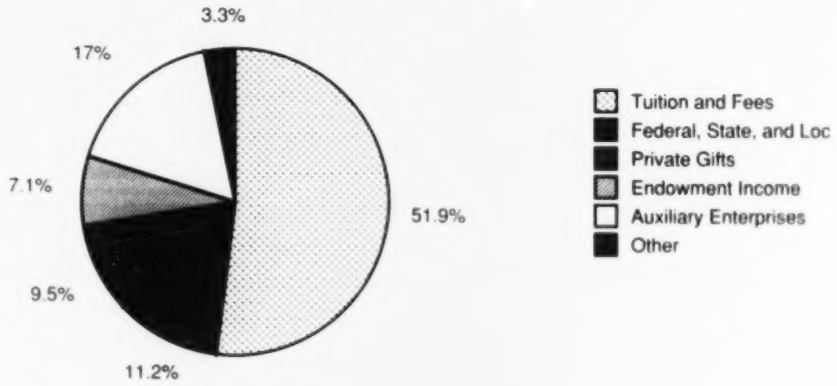
- Baccalaureate colleges are more dependent than other institutional types on tuition and fees, as a primary source of revenue. In 1990-91, baccalaureate colleges generated about half of their total revenues (52 percent) from tuition and fees compared to a range of 14-35 percent for other types of institutions. This indicates baccalaureate colleges are becoming even more dependent on tuition and fees, since in 1980-81, the proportion they collected from tuition and fees was 46 percent (see figure 5).

- The reliance on tuition and fees varies among baccalaureate colleges. Although some colleges may have high rates of student tuition and fees, they may also raise substantial sums from private giving, endowment income, and government grants and contracts. Therefore, their dependence on tuition dollars is not as great as at other types of baccalaureate colleges where tuition and fees comprise most of the institution's revenue. Almost one-quarter of the baccalaureate colleges in 1990-91 may be considered to be "highly dependent" on tuition and fees; that is, 60 percent or more of their current funds revenues came from that source (see figure 6).

- Compared to other types of institutions, baccalaureate colleges also relied more heavily on support from endowment income, annual private giving, and auxiliary enterprises as proportions of their total revenues. In 1990-91, about one in every three dollars (34 percent) came from these three sources, com-

Figure 5

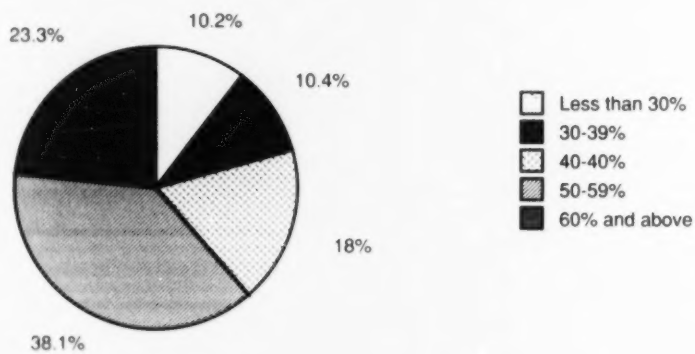
Revenues at Baccalaureate Colleges by Source of Funds: 1990 – 91



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

Figure 6

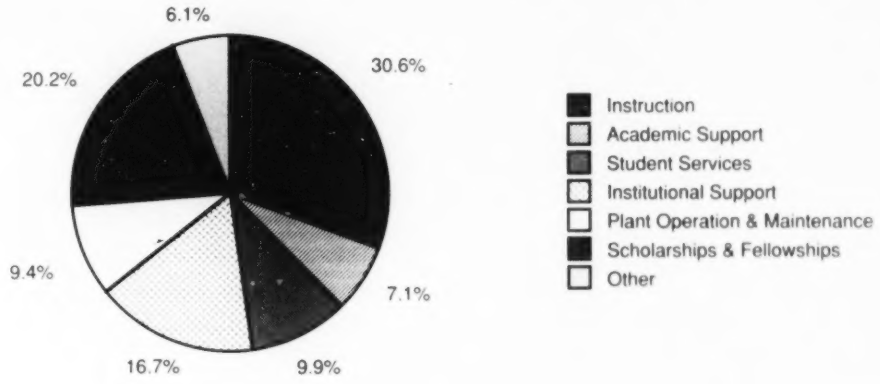
Distribution of Baccalaureate Colleges by Degree of Reliance on Tuition and Fees: 1990 – 91



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

Figure 7

Educational and General Expenditures at Baccalaureate Colleges: 1990 – 91



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

pared to a range of 8-19 percent across other institutional types. Dependence on these three sources of revenues was only slightly less than it had been ten years earlier, when the figure was 39 percent.

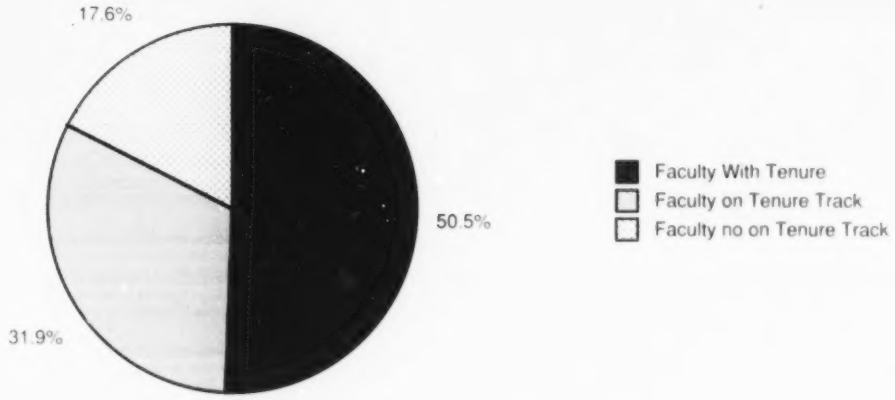
- In 1990-91, baccalaureate colleges devoted about 30 percent of their educational and general expenditures budget on instructional costs, compared to 35 percent ten years earlier.
- Nearly half of baccalaureate colleges' educational and general expenditures (47 percent) went to scholarships, institutional support, and student services. At other institutional types, the range of expenditures was only 19-33 percent.
- The proportion of the educational and general expenditures dedicated to scholarships and fellowships at baccalaureate colleges is growing; in 1980-81 it was 12 percent and by 1990-91 it had increased to 20 percent (see figure 7).

Faculty Characteristics

- In 1989-90, approximately one in three full-time faculty members at baccalaureate colleges were women. Across institutional types, only two-year colleges had a higher proportion (42 percent).
- One in two full-time faculty members held tenured positions at baccalaureate colleges, while another third (32 percent) were on the tenure track. Eighteen percent were in a non-tenure-track position. Three in ten full-time faculty members were full professors (see figures 8 and 9).
- There is evidence that efforts are under way to increase the number of women and minority faculty members. However, there seems to be more success in the recruitment of women. Data from the *Campus Trends, 1993* report show that, between 1991-92 and 1992-93, two in five baccalaureate colleges experienced a net gain in women faculty and almost half had a net gain in the hiring of women to tenure-track positions. However, while about one in four cited net gains for minority faculty, only 14 percent had a real growth in the number of minority faculty with tenure.
- Faculty at baccalaureate and comprehensive colleges teach a similar number of courses each year. At both of these types of institutions the most common number of courses taught annually was eight or nine. By contrast, faculty at two-year colleges were more likely to teach ten or more courses, while the majority of the faculty at doctoral-granting universities taught less than six courses per year.
- Administrators of baccalaureate colleges responding to the 1993 ACE survey expressed more concern about certain faculty issues

Figure 8

Tenure Status of Faculty at Baccalaureate Colleges: 1989 – 90



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

than did their colleagues at other types of institutions. For example, 41 percent of baccalaureate college administrators (54 percent of all administrators) felt that their institutions were "excellent" or "very good" in the ability to attract and hold good faculty. Also, fewer baccalaureate administrators ranked their institutions in the highest categories on the adequacy of faculty compensation (14 vs 29 percent) and the adequacy of faculty development opportunities (29 vs 42 percent), compared to their peers at other institutions.

- Faculty salaries are lower at baccalaureate colleges than at four-year institutions. For example, 1992-93 data from the American Association of University Professors' annual survey show that full professors' salaries at baccalaureate colleges averaged $48,390. This was comparable to the figure for full professors at two-year colleges ($47,310), but it was far less than the average at doctorate-granting universities ($66,780) or comprehensive colleges ($54,760).

- A recent study of full-time faculty by James Fairweather shows that, even at baccalaureate colleges where the emphasis traditionally has been on undergraduate education, there persists a research-oriented reward structure. Faculty members who spend more time than their colleagues on research and publishing activities were compensated more than those who spent more hours teaching.

Profile of Presidents

A recent study of 1990 college presidents by the Center for Leadership Development at ACE reveals the following characteristics of the chief executives of baccalaureate colleges:

- Women comprised almost 18 percent of baccalaureate college presidents; that proportion across all types of institutions was 12 percent. Eight percent were people of color (compared to 10 percent elsewhere). The median age of baccalaureate presidents was similar to that of all presidents, 54 years. Almost three in ten were members of a religious order (compared to 15 percent elsewhere).

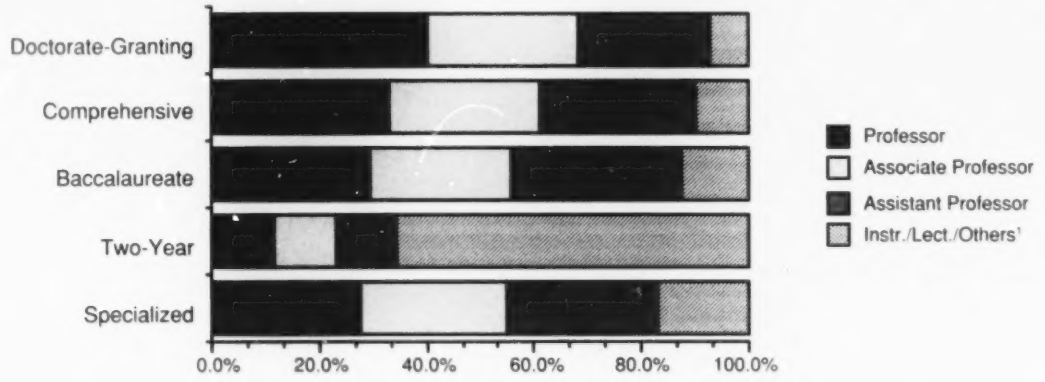
- Baccalaureate college presidents were most likely to have concentrated in the fields of humanities/fine arts (29 percent) or education (29 percent); two in three presidents had earned a Ph.D., and another 15 percent had received the Ed.D.

- Two in three presidents do not hold academic tenure prior to becoming president. Only 27 percent held tenured faculty positions while serving as president.

- The average length of service as president was slightly less than 7 years. (Across institutional types the range was 4-9 years.) About three out of four presidents (77 percent) had been external candidates for their positions. Fourteen percent of all baccalaureate presidents were in their second consecutive presidency.

Figure 9

Faculty Rank by Institutional Type: 1989 – 90



' Institutions that have unranked faculty were instructed to report them all in the other category.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, unpublished data.

Looking to the Future

Enrollment growth and program expansion were listed by two-thirds of the baccalaureate colleges surveyed by ACE as significant goals in their institutional planning. It is important to note that during the decade of the 1980s, when the number of annual high school graduates declined from 3.1 to 2.4 million (a decrease of 23 percent), the average size of baccalaureate colleges grew by 25 percent. This is largely due to successful recruitment strategies, especially of older students.

While the proportion of women students at baccalaureate colleges has remained the same during the ten-year period 1980-81 to 1990-91 (averaging about 59 percent), the proportion of part-time students increased from 19 to 25 percent. As more baccalaureate colleges try to recruit nontraditional students, the proportion of part-time students may continue to increase.

The proportion of students of color has remained about the same during this period (averaging 14 -16 percent). More than half of the colleges in the *Campus Trends,* 1992 report employed these strategies to improve the participation of minority students:

- monitor minority attrition each term;
- compile completion rates for minority students; and
- hold workshops each year to increase racial/cultural awareness among students, faculty, and staff.

Tuition and fees are expected to remain the primary source of revenue for baccalaureate colleges. In fact, in 1992, two in five baccalaureate college administrators assumed that their reliance on tuition and fee revenues would increase in the next few years. However, campaigns to increase annual revenues from endowment income and private giving have been successful at many baccalaureate colleges and could contribute to the funds available for institutionally-based financial aid. This financial aid enables baccalaureate colleges to offer educational programs to a more economically diverse student body than would be possible otherwise. The trend toward increased expenditures for scholarships and fellowships is also expected to continue.

As they looked to the future, administrators who participated in the *Campus Trends* surveys voiced optimism. About one in three rated their financial condition as "excellent" or "very good." Over half expected that in the next five years they would increase their faculty ranks due to enrollment growth, the replacement of retired faculty and the introduction of new programs. Finally, when asked to project enrollment growth during the next five years, the large majority (three in four) anticipated enrollment growth and one in five expected their increases to exceed 10 percent.

Data Sources and Technical Notes

The primary sources of data used for this report were the annual *IPEDS* surveys administered by

the U.S. Department of Education and the *Campus Trends* reports published by the American Council on Education. The U.S. Department of Education annually collects information on enrollment, finances, earned degrees, and institutional characteristics from postsecondary education institutions. Historically, the response rates to these surveys have been consistently high. For the years chosen for this report (1978-79 through 1991-92), the response rates ranged between 69 and 95 percent. All proprietary schools have been excluded from this analysis. Most of the data in this brief came from IPEDS data tapes.

In addition, material was included from the recent *Campus Trends, 1990, 1992, and 1993* reports published by the Division of Policy Analysis and Research of the American Council on Education (ACE). The response rate for the 1990 and 1992 reports averaged 82-81 percent. For the *Campus Trends, 1993* report, 510 institutions that offer a general program of undergraduate instruction were surveyed. (These institutions are part of a larger stratified sample of 670 institutions which constitute ACE's Higher Education Panel.) The overall response rate to the *Campus Trends, 1993* questionnaire was 80 percent.

In this report, all research and doctorate-granting universities have been collapsed into a single category entitled "doctorate-granting." In addition, "specialized" institutions have been combined into a single category and include schools that focus on art, music, design, medicine, engineering, theology, business, law, health professions, and teaching.

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